Stage-Hogs & Road Dogs.
Chapter -18-

Just before the Tour started in 1996 the new V3 lineup featuring **Jim** (Vocal/Guitar), **Leland** (Bass) and **Sam** (Drums) did a very stressful warm up show at **Dan Dougan's** bar. Sam and Leland were so good at that point they could have carry the show without **Jim Shepard**. This was a few months after Jim and **Stacy McCloud** had broken up. I remember Jim coming back from a mix-down session in L.A. only to discover that the "*hen had flown the coop*" for another Rooster. Sadly, the old goat had been replace by Ding Dong the "muffin crusher". But the crafty Jimbo had used her credit card to buy a new amp and some guitars. The deal was Jim was supposed to pay her back once he got his record label check. But, in light of their breakup, Jim felt no obligation to pay her back! she had bailed. All that was left was the carpeting in the apartment. Jim had to buy a microwave oven an a used radio to stay sane! So I stay with him for a month, both of us sleeping on the floor and surviving on microwave burritos, ketchup and beer. She had stripped everything down to the bone. But, she should have waited till Jim had paid her back before she cleaned his clock! So Jim felt no obligation to pay her back! It would be a month later that she would catch up with **Mr. Jim Shepard**.

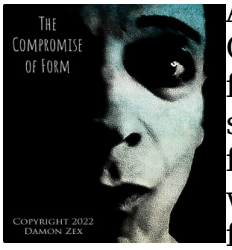
In the mean time he had hired **Kevin Janow** to do the **"America Face"** Video for MTV. That was done at Milo Arts. So to kill two birds with one stone Kevin ask Jim to film the Stache show on 16 MM. So, to a sold out crowd, the **"Bassholes"** opened that night for V3. The Bassholes were **Don Howland** and **Lamont Bim Thomas.** The Bassholes had been getting some major press at that point. Don and Bim were "regulars" at Used Kids and Larry's bar. At the time they had a decent stage show act. After their set I was sitting at the table with Charles and **Julie Otten** when all of a sudden Stacy burst in with two cops. Oh Shit. They marched through the crowd and onto the stage. Next thing, the pigs started grabbing Jim's guitar and amp. Then they marched his ass outside. I followed to see was was happening. Outside the cops threaten to take Jim to Jail. I was going to video it but the cops threaten to break my camcorder and take me to Jail too. Then Jim told me to stand down. So Jim quickly agreed to Stacy's demand for payment. What Jim didn't realize was that all the newspapers in Columbus Ohio had ads for that V3 show. So armed with this knowledge Stacy knew when and how to confront Jimbo for his debt. So, the next day Jim cut her a check and the matter was closed. Except that she got to keep all the equipment and money too! Jim used my guitar and **Mitch Mitchell's** Marshall amp to be able to do the tour. Part of my job was to make sure the guitars and PA monitors worked right for V3. Sometimes I even helped **G.B.V.** And **Spoon** with their tech and merchandise issues too.

By late **March of 1996** I was on tour with V3, G.B.V. And Spoon. On the road I realized that there was a great variety of choice in the cabinet of human thoughts. Some of these choices really didn't make much sense. That is when I came to conclude that "*making a living off music*" clogged up the pipes of human creative exploration. The behaviors of the fans and musicians; the quest for

fame, the caprices of fame and riches, the powers of air or shadows of Hades all came into view on that tour. I became an "*ass playing a flute among the jargon of gibberish and agendas*". So for next month or so I hunker down and waited for the storm to pass.

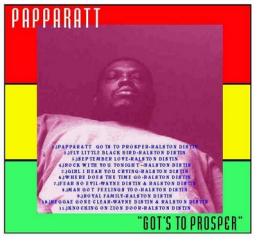
Finally in early **June of 1996** I returned to my Kimberly Ave studio. I was in much need of rest and repair. "*Road Warp*" is a funny strange creature with claws! I could hear and feel the voice of a 1000 road dog experiences explode in my head all at once! I slept for 3 day straight and when I woke up Jimbo was at the door telling me he wanted out of his contract with American Records. He was going to ask for a "buy out" of his contract. He was supposed to deliver 2 more records and tour to support those projects. But neither of us wanted anything more to do with the big time. So he contacted his lawyer and got the ball rolling. It would be 10 years later before I toured again with **Mike Rep** and **The Quotas**. So with melancholy sweetness I let go all the vexatious impressions and focus on recording. Little did I know my own side show was about to begin!

The Citizen-Journal was a newspaper that the former editor **Sam Purdue** ran in Columbus, Ohio. Sam Purdue used to live at Kimberly Ave where I was now living. The next door neighbor always resented Sam Purdue. He would tell me about Sam's drinking problem. It seemed when Sam got really drunk he would stand naked in front of the main windows and let the neighbor see him pee on the hardwood floors. I don't think they like each other very much! Entitlement is the affliction of kings and queens and this neighbor seem to view himself as such. But such are the sophism of human ignorance. **Sam Purdue** was and editor and columnist when being city a newspaper seemed to be just about the greatest job in the world. Sam never moved in the circles that the national correspondents at the Republican convention move in; he never really got out of central Ohio. He was low on style and flash; an earthy, white-haired man with sadness behind his bright eyes, he resembled more than a little bit like "Sam the Lion" character played by **Ben Johnson** in **"The Last Picture Show."** About his work Sam once stated; *"If you don't like people with funny last names or people who talk in a funny way or people who smell bad or are about to be evicted--the losers--then you are in the wrong business. The establishment has easy access to the media, but those people don't."*



Around the end of **June of 1996** the **Cheater Slicks** arrived on the OSU scene from Boston. That is when I began to study song flow for LP sequencing. I began to serve the story and moved away from serving the song. When a windows 95 laptop and audio software fell into my hands, the door opened for post & pre-production, which was a new universe for me. I would spend years trying to figuring out how to balance the analog with the digital. By 2002, my personal norm had become *"Do- It-Yourself"* LP's and streaming distribution. Also around this time I had to pay a traffic fine at the Columbus Police Department downtown. When I got in line I saw **Damin Zex** who had been beating up by his girlfriend. WTF? He was in the process of filing assault charge on her. **Zex** had a black eye and show me a few of his bruises. He did not seem

like he was into female violence. Also, around this time Jim had released V3 "*Russia Roulette Chinese Style"*, plus a V3 song for **Tom Lax's** *"Tard & Further'd"* compilation CD. Not only this, but Jim's Iron Press released the video *"The Cheapest Drug on the Market"*. Finally, Mike Rep also pitched his hat into the ring with his *"A Tree Stump Named Desire"* LP. And to top it all off, on **August 15th** of **1996 Scrawl** made the cover of the Columbus Guardian newspaper. On tour, both Jim and I had made the acquaintance of former G.B.V. Bassist **Matt Sweeney** (**Chavez & Super Wolves**). Sweeney is musician/producer/songwriter type who over the years has worked with **Adele**, **Johnny Cash**, **Neil Young**, **Neil Diamond**, **Iggy Pop** & the **Dixie Chicks** if I'm not mistaken. *See: Life on the Road with Guided by Vodka. (The G.B.V.3 Tour of 1996)*



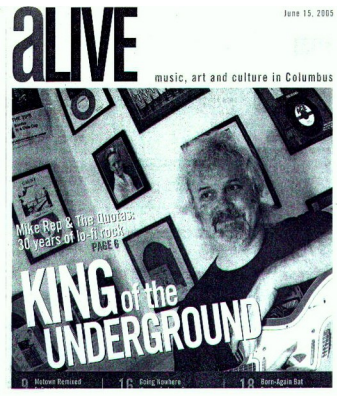
By that **Fall of 1996** I was busy working on some **Julie Otten** poetry with **Gregg Casey.** I had met Julie at Jim Shepard's poetry readings at Mr. Larry's Bar. I like what I heard and started to doing a few sessions with her in my studio. By that time I had just released **"I Wanta Be You"** (*The Arlus Stitch Story*) as a private limited release on my NS Records label. Soon after **Pappratt** and his little brother showed up again and we started working on some of his new material. In September Jim Released a CD called **"Twisted Steel and the Tits of Angels".** But the demands of logic and aesthetics were beginning to take a toll on both of us. Jim was becoming weary of the game of life. The wage slave game was wearing us down. At times he would confide in me and say, "*squid, I don't know how much more I can take*". To which I would say; "*you'll get through it. Just hang in there*".

Jim had recently hooked up with a fashion executive who had a penthouse in one of the newly build skyscrapers down town. Her job had made her very rich and she drove a fancy car and I think maybe she may have had a private plane out at the airport. From what I could gather her job took her around the world. Both Jim and I were impressed by her movie star appearance and her excessive wealth.

One night after a very successful contract closing in New York City Jimbo calls me and tells me that she wants to take the both of us to this 5 star restaurant down town. Then Jim opens up to me about her. It seems she was a "*nymphomaniac*" and Jimbo couldn't satisfy her! He was so sore he could barely walk. Depressed and stressed he needed his old "*backup buddy- the wily squidster*" to cover his tracks. Jim swore to me that it would take the whole OSU football squad to make this women happy. He was stressed. I didn't believe him. I thought he was bullshitting me. But, upon receipt of this "*joyfully good news*" I quickly showered and shit and jumped into "*Jack-The-Lad* " mode. When Jimbo and her show up in her shinny new car I was whisked away to this fancy restaurant. Once we got there she whips out her America Express card and we started drinking. After my second bloody Mary I felt her hand unzip me and she gives Jim and I both a hand jobs. You should have seen the look on our faces! Such dexterity is priceless! In public no less! It was a skill set highly prized by Rock n' Rollers! She had given the waiter a few hundred to look the other way.

Boom! We were given a booth away from prying eyes. Then out comes the coke. I'm sitting there in the booth and things are getting very blurry. But the Coke, Weed and Bloody Mary's kept rolling non stop and the squidster blacked out!

The next morning I wake up naked on the hardwood floors of my apartment wondering what the hell happen to me. The smell of sex was all around me. I became very worried. Did Jim and I run a train on her? Did she wear us both out? It was the kind of black out that puts the fear of god in you. So I took a bath and went to bed. The next day Jim stops over and says he is going to break up with her. He was desperate. Jim thought she might try to harm herself or him. I ask if she owned a gun. Jimbo didn't think so. "*That is never a good sign if she does*" I said. Jimbo didn't realize how unstable she was until it was too late! He had receive $500 bucks from her for spending money when he had drop her off back at the penthouse. Now she felt he was hers. I viewed it as "*services*" rendered. But Jim was between a rock and a hard place with her. If she thought Jim was going to marry her she was mistaken! At the time Jim was staying at different places with friends. He was jumping around from residents to residents a lot. He had voice mail and that was it. That was the only way to contact him. So Jim disappeared and for a while I think a private detective was trying to track him down! Eventually, she gave up on "*Casper the Friendly Ghost*"! And when the dust finally settle Jim became even more depressed. Then we got word that Charles was staying at a homeless shelter in Las Vegas. He had hitchhiked to Yucca Mountain were they keep all of America's nuclear waste. Charles had been sleeping in the desert, but somehow he was able to get a ride to Las Vegas and ended up at the homeless shelter.



By **October of 1996 Mike Rep** had married some woman named Debbie. I didn't think she was Rep's type but they seemed happy at first. They had bought a house and for a while Rep seem to settle down. I didn't think much of it at the time. But looking back I see how the tides of uncertainty were washing up against all of our choices. Everyone always ends up where they need to be I guess. It is funny how the pass can predict your future. Now, I would like to speak to some the bands and musicians that had a huge impact on my guitar work over the years: *James Burton, Jeff Beck, Pete Townsend, Richard Thompson, Eric Clapton, Jimi Hendrix, Jimi Page, The Edge, Chuck Berry, Keith Richard, Robbie Keriger, George Harrison, Jerry Garcia, John Lennon, Mick Ronson, Paul McCartney Paul Kossoff, Mick Ralphs, Augus & Malcom Young, Bob Dylan and Neil Young.* These were the people who caught my ears. Their hooks informed my tastes. Also, as a bass player, for me it was: *John Entwisle, Mel Shather, Andy Fraser, Chas Chanler, Jack Bruce and Boz Burrell.* They were the dudes who knew how to hold the bottom. Add to these influences the golden radio years of 1950s and 1960s. Music like *The Beatles, Who, Doors, Stones, Motown, the Blues* and *top 50 AM pop*. It was an amazing melting pot of culture that had soaked into my brain. But over all I would say that *Emitt Rhoades* and *Jim Shepard* were the ones who had the most lasting impact on my song style. Both of them were D.I.Y.s! And for the

most part, the larger body of my work reflexes that. I would say I had the very best rock n' roll music grown up as a kid. I use to listen to my transistor radio trying to figure out how they did it. It took a life time but I finally figure out all of their tricks.

In **November** of **1996** around Thanksgiving my prediction about Jimbo getting to see his kids came true! One morning I heard a knock on my door and two exhausted and dirty teenagers appeared out of mist. It was Gabriel Shepard and his pregnant girlfriend who had run away from Roxanne and wanted to find Jimbo. Their station wagon was packed to brim with their personal belongings. It had ball tires on all the wheels and Korn and Grateful Dead decals all over it. How they where able to drive from Nashville to Columbus without being busted was a miracle. They had brought with them a huge bag of weed and were exhausted by the time they hit my door. So my mom, after they had taken a shower and eaten, when out and bought them a futon bed to sleep on. In the mean time I cleared out the Drum Room so they could have some privacy. Boy, that was a big mistake.

Gabe was so excited about becoming a father. He put the fear of god in me! But he didn't have any job skills. Nor did he finish high school. When I questioned him on how he was going to raise a family at 18 years old he didn't understand the gravity of his situation. I had made that same mistaken long ago too! Maybe he thought that because his dad had a major record contract Jimbo would support them. It is my view that Roxanne's need for revenge, had really made a mess trying to raise him on her own. It appear to me that she just let Gabe do what ever he wanted. Jimbo had always been the one to dish out discipline with Gabe. So Roxanne just let the kid run wild because she didn't know how to control Gabe. This same phenomena had happen to me when I was on the farm. So after 7 years of not a word, Roxanne dropped the problem back into Jim hands. This was totally unexpected and Jimbo struggle to get a handle on the situation. He was overjoyed to have the kids back in his life but lack the skill set to cope.

Jimbo and I had many talks about how to keep Gabe from marrying this poor unfortunate girl. Finally, we decided to send her back to Nashville where her people could help her raise the baby. Wisely, my mom stayed out of it. But she was very worried about the situation. So once the coast was clear Gabe and her began to have “sex non-stop” and smoke weed for the next month. He was like the energizer bunny! I was working a 40 hours a week job and they kept me up all night with their love making and partying. I kept asking them to “party” when I was at work but they were night owls and just blew me off. They would sleep till 5 PM then start to party. So finally I told Jimbo they had to go! He begged me to let them stay but I was exhausted. So Jimbo moved from his garden theater apartment into a half a duplex on campus. This was after he put her on a greyhound bus for Nashville. I don't think Gabe ever forgave me for that. But he was not ready for marriage at that point. I doubt he even knew how

to change a diaper.

Towards the end of 1996 Jim and I did a few duet shows around town. Mostly I hung around my studio and recorded or went to the bars on campus to meet friends. By this time **Rudy Crash n' Burn Smith** and I had decided to form a band called **“Studio 110”**. So we ask **Rick Klaus Theis** if he would play bass and he agreed. So we began to rehearse on the weekends. That lasted right up until my mother's death in May of 1997, then Theis quit the band to go on a world tour with a group of strangers. They had plan to visit south America and the middle east on a private good will tour. Unfortunately, after the South American leg Theis bail on that project. Due to the intense amount of recording sessions it took a while for Rudy and I to find a replacement Theis. On the other hand, **Damon Zex** (*Fred Zanner*) who had a fine arts degree from OSU, had created a Public Access Channel which featured his weekly show. Years later he would become a mortgage and lone officer selling real estate in Columbus. His show focused on the outrageous life style as an artist. For the show he cast his alter ego **“Damon Zex”** as the main character. Some of my favorite Zex Shows were *“Drinking & Driving with Damon Zex”*, *“Damon's Drug Zone”* and *“Hate-o-Rama”*! Back at the time **Damon Zex** was esteemed as a Columbus Ohio Underground Cult Icon.

Hippy Dave had been working at the “Psychic Hot-line” to make ends meet. He had married a women name “Moe” and they had an apartment over top of the Garden Theater at that time. He had got Jimbo a job there too and both were doing card readings over the phone. Hippy Dave had been a student of occultist **Aleister Crowley**. He knew his way around Tarot card readings. I guess the object of the game was to keep the customer on the phone for as long as possible because the company charged by the minuet. Both Jim and Hippy took calls from all over the states. People would ask for readings on all sorts of subjects -from money to relationship issues. For a few months all seemed well. Both Hippy and Jimbo seem to be to be doing great. Then one day Jimbo got a call that deeply rattled his tree. It seemed that a very suicidal man called with a question about his wife having an affair. Normally, Jim had a script to handle most callers but this was a curve ball out of left field. Jim was forced into crisis mode.

The man informed Jim that his wife was sleeping in bed. The man had a gun! The dude was trying to figure out if she was cheating. If so, he was going to shoot the bitch in her sleep! So all of a sudden Jimbo was dealing with a life or death situation. Jimbo was an artist by training. He was not a shrink. But the man kept pressing Jimbo for a “yes or no” answer. If Jimbo said she was fucking some other guy the bitch would get her brains blow out! It was a wake up call for Jimbo! What a way to go folks! Jimbo use every trick in the book to try to reason with the guy. He probe the situation with lots questions which seem to indicate she was a slut and had many lovers. So logically, after about an hour, Jimbo lied to the “lunatic customer” and said she wasn't fucking around. It probably saved the woman's life. After that call, a freaked out Jimbo quit Psychic Hot-line and took a job as a “dish washer”. He seemed much happier after that. His buy out check from America Records had arrive and I told him to invest some of it in the

stock market. Jim was becoming increasing worn out. So to get away from all the trouble and stress Jim began to travel out of state. This was after he had moved in to his new duplex home with Gabe. The stress of dealing with other people and their selfish agendas had worn Jimbo out. Shortly after that life or death phone call, I took a another contract job at Ross Labs which lasted until 2002. It provide me with cash and some long term stability.

The Ross Lab gig was a piece of cake and I had my weekends off. That meant I could go full force with my art and not have to worry about making a living. Earlier when Charles had moved back from Cleveland to Columbus he introduce me to **Rick "Klaus" Theis** the poet. Charles, Klaus and Jimbo had been hanging out doing poetry reading at some of the local book stores in Columbus. I would attend some of these readings and was impressed. This was right about the time I began to develop some songs which became the **"Tree People"** project which I release later that year. Also, around this time I was also doing a lot of recording sessions with **Rick Klaus Theis, Jim Shepard, Hippy Dave, Charles Cicirella, Kane Naylor, Cloud Tiger, Gregg Casey, Papparat, Tommy Jay, Julie Otten, Rudy "Crash n' Burn" Smith, Wild Bill Evans, Jeff "JB" Brown, Kevin Kausality, Nicole Nicotine** and I began to hang out with some Israeli record collector named **Oren Feltman.** Oren had taken a shine to our Studio 110 shenanigans. So Rudy and I let him hang out in the studio with us. By that time Studio 110 had become party central. On the weekends I had many local musicians and poets stopping by to chat or see what was happening. Also, around this time Rudy was becoming suspicious about his marriage. He sensed sometime was wrong but couldn't put his finger on it. Over time he because very dark about dealing with other people. It was if life had poisoned his heart. So Studio 110 had become necessary therapy for him.

Then on **May 12th 1997** my mom died unexpectedly. Boom! She had clashed with a nurse at Grant Hospital who was in charged of her meds. The Nurse had "refused" to give my mother the needed blood thinner after her hip replacement operation. They didn't like each other and this nurse was very spiteful to my sick mother. I found out later that she had been fighting with my mother and didn't visit her room to check. As a result my mother didn't get her meds and a blood clot quickly formed and traveled to her to her heart. This caused mom to died. Of course we filed a wrongful death case in court but the Grant Hospital lawyer then pulled some of "shit" and the "deadline for filing" was missed. Some needed paperwork didn't make it on time. So the Judge promptly dismissed the case. I was never able to find out if this judge was connected to the hospital but it smell like bullshit to me.

We had them dead to right but for some unknown reason our lawyer missed the deadline and the law firm he worked at fired him! But the damage had been done and Grant Hospital got off "*Scott Free*". I'm not sure if my lawyer was paid off or if it was an honest mistake? But my mother was dead and me and my sister were in shock. I had visited mom every day that week from Monday, the day of the operation, through Friday. That Friday around 5:30 PM I told my mother I would pick her up on Saturday morning at 9 AM and take her home. I didn't really

understand at the time that she was in the process of dying. When I got home around 8 PM that Friday my sister had left a frantic phone message saying mom was “gone”. Boom! When I told Jimbo he was in shock too. Mom always defended Jimbo to me. She saw him as her son. After that Jimbo's mind set changed. He grew very dark. I think he knew he was going to kill himself but choose to wait until I had gotten over mom's death.

The rest of 1997 saw the release of **Ego Summit LP**, **Shit Canned CD, Pappratt Got to Prosper CD** but the **Lorca's Grave** project failed to secure a release date due to Theis's departure. Then on **September 27th**, late at night I get a phone call from **Greg Casey** informing me that **Kevyn Kausality** had fell down a flight of steps and died. Greg told me to meet him at Dick's Den but never showed up. I stood waiting for hours. Just the week before I had shot video of Kevyn and the Kausalities recording at **The Diamond Mine Studio** in Columbus. This was another shock on top of my mothers death that left my head spinning! I was have trouble making sense of all this turbulence. So I turned to drugs and booze to numb the pain. In the mean time **Rudy Crash n' Burn's** wife **Loretta** had been caught cheating on him red handed. Rudy became very negative about her betrayal. I tried to comfort him but it was useless. All I could do was watch him suffer.

Poor Rudy didn't have a clue about it until his doctor informed him that he had a very bad case of “*vernal warts*”; which immediately needed to be “*burn off*”. Surprise surprise! Ouch! Rudy was Heartbroken and crushed by his wife's betrayal. This was another emotional explosion I had to deal with at the time. So, I tried to comfort Rudy as best I could but I wasn't doing too well at that point either! Slowly, Rudy became very bitter and hostile towards her. He filed for divorce and moved her into her own apartment. I always kept away from her because she seem to be a negative sort of person to me. When I saw that she was unfaithful I lost all respect. Rudy's rage did not serve him well. He went out of his way to tell everyone his wife had given him vernal warts. I wanted to tell him to shut up but he was hell bent on telling everyone she fucked him over. People were laughing at him behind his back. The jokes were endless and I tried to defend him as best I could. The sad part is that I knew the musician who was bragging about sleeping with her. So with all this chaos flying around me I went the Funeral Service for Kevyn Kausality. When I got to the crematorium I saw a vase next to a huge picture of Kevyn in a dress suit. WTF? Kevyn in a suite? All I could say to Kevyn's Picture was “Nice Tie”.

I had never seen **Kevyn** in a suit before and was shocked he had posed for it. “Kevyn's 3 year old baby girl was running around playing and having the time of her life. The poor child was unaware of the fatherless drama that was about to unfold in her life. Seeing that kind of future sorrow was very profound. It changes your life. Slowly, I began to question the reason for my existence. I knew

I was doom to create music. It was like some sick joke that you suddenly realized your the "*butt of*". The Rudy/Mom/Kevyn/Arlus nexus had messed up my balance and I was in deep emotional trouble. Then **Lynn Cart** told me that their would be a **Kevyn Kasualty Memorial** show at Little Brothers on **Oct 12th 1997.** So I got busy and formed a one off band called the "**Beached Whales**". This group had **T.A. Lafferty** on Vocal/Harp/Guitar. **Jerry Felty**/Bass. **Tommy Jay**/Drums. And me on Vocal/guitar. On the night of the show Lafferty show up with a "package of seeds" that a "*Cherokee Shaman*" used in their sweat lodge for vision quests. So I ate a hand full and by the time I hit the stage I was in outer space!

There is a video of this show and it was not a good performance. The Drummer from the other band who said that Tommy could use his kit was slow in allowing the kit to be set up on stage. Tommy had to join the rest of the band after the first three songs we over. But Tommy recovered and finished the set as like a professional. Also, **Jimbo, Charles Cicirella, Hippy Dave, Greg Casey** and **Wild Bill** did a one off performance. This was also filmed. But during the show I had to go to the bathroom 2 or 3 times to puke up those seeds. The next day after I had recovered Jimbo and I had a long talk. Jimbo confessed to me that he had some blood in his pee but didn't seem too concerned about it at that point. But he made a point to tell me that he couldn't take much more. So by early **1998** there were very black clouds forming over my future. I would be in therapy with a shrink 2002 till 2012 before I able to restore my own mental health. Those years had really taken a toll on my head! So three time a week I would meet with my doctor to address the causes of my unprocessed pain. It was a slow road and I had a few set backs along the way. But in the end I was able heal and restore my balance. That **January** of **1998** I had a sense of great changes coming my way. But I had no idea the roll that suicide would play in my personal drama!